

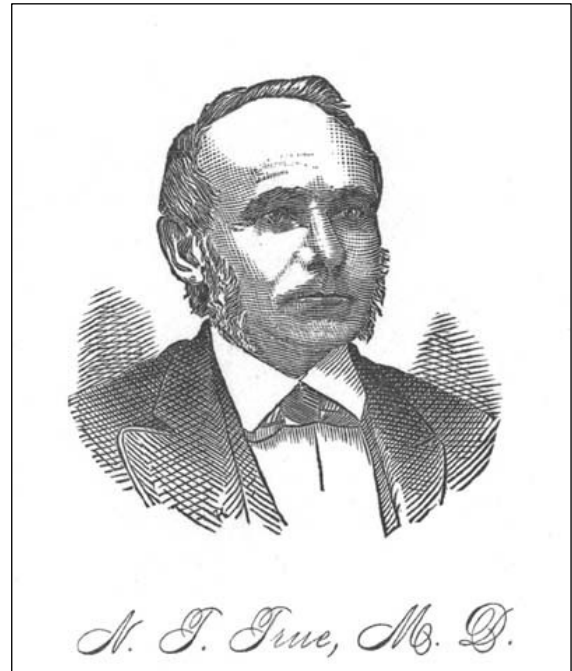
"To recall their customs, sufferings and relics..."

The Bethel Antiquarian Suppers of the 1850s

American life in the mid-nineteenth century was the scene of constant change. Smoke-belching factories, crowded cities, the expanding West, and the invention of many labor-saving devices resulted in a growing sense of rootlessness for many of the country's citizens. For New Englanders, in particular, this feeling of displacement was offset somewhat by a desire to return to a simpler time—what one historian of the period has called "a longing for earlier days and customs."

Inspired by the efforts of such pioneering organizations as the Massachusetts Historical Society (1791), American Antiquarian Society (1812), Maine Historical Society (1822), New Hampshire Historical Society (1823), and New England Historic Genealogical Society (1845), individuals in rural communities began to take notice of "old-time" objects (notably furnishings and items associated with the kitchen hearth), which were viewed as morally and aesthetically superior to household goods then being produced for the mass market. Items ranging from porcelain teapots and spinning wheels to pewter platters and fireplace tongs evoked the comforts of a vanishing world of simple pleasures and "heroic patriotism," the latter stemming directly from the Revolutionary War era.

In the decade before the Civil War (when antiques were frequently displayed at "sanitary fairs"), a variety of groups of people in many New England towns began holding "antiquarian suppers." During these occasions, citizens dressed in old-fashioned clothes, brought "relics" (anything odd or old) to exhibit, shared stories of days gone by, and enjoyed a bountiful meal. Typically, the driving force behind these informal gatherings was a local historian keenly interested in recording the town's "colonial" traditions, legends, and events. In western Maine, the earliest known examples of such antiquarian suppers were held by the Bethel Farmer's Club between 1855 and 1857, under the watchful eye of one of northern New England's most prominent historians of that time, Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True (1812-1887).



Engraved portrait of Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True from Re-Union Poems as Written and Delivered by A. S. Twitchell of Gorham, New Hampshire (1883). Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

A founder of Gould Academy (1836) and, later, editor of *The Bethel Courier* (1858-1861), the town's first newspaper, Dr. True was instrumental in December of 1853 in the creation of Maine's first Farmer's Club at Bethel. (Other early farmer's clubs in Maine were located in Naples [1854]; West Minot/Hebron [1855]; and South Windham, Norridgewock, Waterville, Pembroke/Robbinston, and Fort Fairfield [1857].) According to the Rev. Darius Forbes, a Paris, Maine, Universalist preacher and charter member of the Maine State Agricultural Society, the formation of farmer's clubs was an important "means of usefulness and improvement to the farmer." In an address given at the Oxford County Cattle Show and Fair on October 5, 1854, Forbes stated, "The members of these clubs may meet every week in the winter and employ themselves in discussions or in reading some of the many valuable

works on agriculture. They can then test what they read." A precursor to the Grange (Patrons of Husbandry), farmer's clubs, at least in Bethel, also provided the type of forward-looking and backward-glancing ambiance that encouraged a veneration of the past. On an annual basis for three years—in 1855, 1856 and 1857—members of the Bethel Farmer's Club closed out their winter meetings with "a supper after the olden time." Although this early effort toward preserving (and celebrating) Bethel's past did not result in the formation of a permanent historical association in the town (the Bethel Historical Society would not be founded until 1966), detailed accounts of these events were written up by Dr. True and published in the pages of the *Oxford Democrat* (see below). Even more significant is the fact that information imparted by those attending the Antiquarian Suppers was carefully recorded by Dr. True and later incorporated in his "History of Bethel," published in serialized form in *The Bethel Courier* newspaper between 1859 and 1861.

On the evening of April 18, 2005, modern-day residents gathered at the Bethel Historical Society for an "antiquarian supper"—likely the first held in the town since 1887, when the Congregational ladies circle held such an event at the Elms hotel on the Bethel Hill common. Sponsored by the Society as a spring fundraiser, the 2005 event took place at the Broad Street home of Dr. Moses Mason, who, with his wife, Agnes Straw Mason, attended all three of the earliest Antiquarian Suppers. A highlight that evening was the display of several items exhibited at the suppers held in the 1850s. So successful, and enjoyable, was the 2005 occasion that it was decided to hold a supper in 2010—which was yet another well-attended event—and every five years thereafter.

— Randall H. Bennett

The following articles, originally published in the *Oxford Democrat*, have been lightly edited; they contain a few corrections, plus minor changes in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling to improve readability.

1855 Antiquarian Supper

Oxford Democrat, Paris, Maine

Friday, March 2, 1855

Antiquarian Supper in Bethel

The following communication is both unique and entertaining. It gives an account of an entertainment, which must have been social, useful and amusing. We think similar meetings, for similar purposes, might be held with profit in every town and village. Soon the

generations which first settled this County will have passed off the stage. Most of the pioneers are already gone. To treasure up their memory, to record their deeds, to celebrate their praises, to imitate their patriotic and virtuous example, to rehearse their legends, to recall their customs, sufferings and relics, should be the high ambition of their sons. We thank the author for this favor, and publish it with favor; and would be happy to receive others of a similar character.

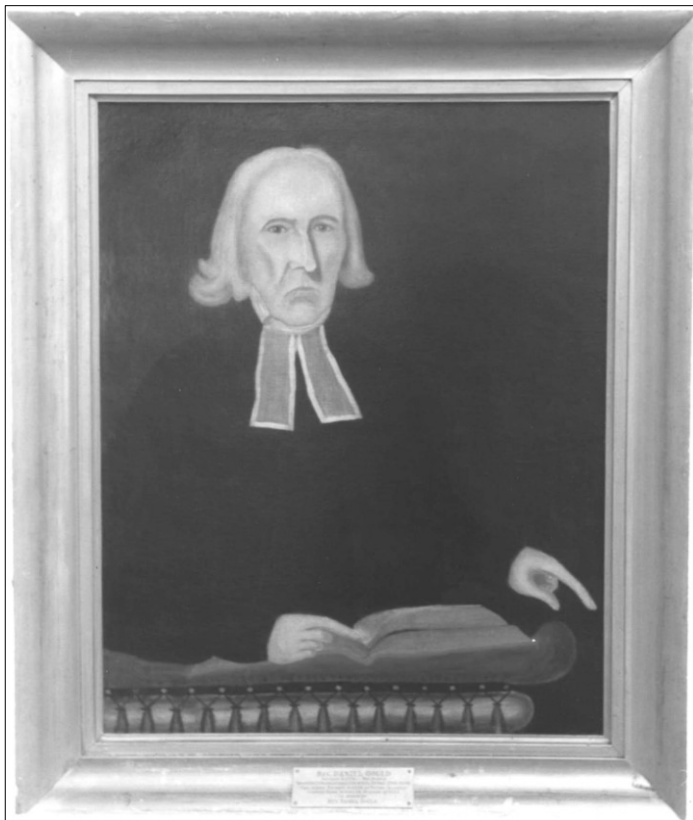
Antiquarian Supper

The Bethel Farmer's Club, in this place, had a supper after the olden time, last evening, which furnished a fine opportunity to collect together the antiquities of the place; and, although we could boast of no articles from the May-Flower, yet enough were gathered to furnish a delightful theme for the evening. A beautiful supper was furnished, consisting of the veritable bean porridge of the past, pumpkin pie, fire cake, parched corn, and sage tea, which were eaten with as much apparent relish, as if it had been a more fashionable supper. A blessing was asked by the patriarch of the town, Peter Twitchell, Esq., now in his ninety-fifth year, who, though unexpectedly called upon, collected his ideas so as to adapt them to the special occasion, much to the delight of the company. After supper, a poem was delivered, commemorative of bean porridge, when an examination was made of the antiquities present. An ancient plate, belonging to the old Gen. Putnam family, was exhibited by one of his descendants. A mug purchased and used at the battle of Bunker Hill. A porcelain tea-canister of olden time, a really elegant affair much resembling a modern Cologne bottle, was exhibited by Hon. Moses Mason, which acquired an additional interest when he informed us that the article was formerly set on the table as a part of the regular tea-set, when each one poured on boiling water for beverage. Various articles of earthen and silver ware, a hundred years old, and upwards, were also exhibited.

An old fashioned hat, bonnet and cloak, of red broadcloth, furnished a rich fund of amusement to the young people. The bonnet, a splendid affair in its day, was the reverse of those worn at the present time, possessing a most ample front as well as rear.

A few ancient books were collected from the Academy Library, and from private individuals, among which were an Arithmetic and Latin Grammar, used just one hundred years ago. These were the property of Rev. Daniel Gould, the first settled minister of the town. A pamphlet without date, entitled, *Consideration on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, for the purpose of raising a Revenue, by Act of Parliament*, manifested a coolness of temper quite characteristic of our

forefathers. Another book printed about the year 1717, was on various religious subjects. Among the titles was, *Some few lines towards a description of the NEW HEAVEN*, written in 1697, author unknown. The writer states "that in 1622, at Plymouth the Drought lasted from the third week in May, to the middle of July, without any rain, and with great heat for the most part," reminding us of a similar drought experienced here last year. Another book was printed in 1733, entitled *Durham Cathedral, together with the Histories painted in the Windows*. The most curious book exhibited was printed in London in 1723, and is entitled *A New Theory of Physick and Diseases, founded on the Principles of the Newtonian Philosophy*. A single extract may enlighten your medical readers: "Bloatiness must arise in all cases, where the solidities of the nourishing Particles are lesser than their Surfaces, in Proportion to the Quantity of Matter they contain, which must render them less compactedly adhering to the Constitution of the Body, and of Consequence must give them greater void Spaces, from whence arises that State or Condition, we call a bulky, or unweildy Corpulency."



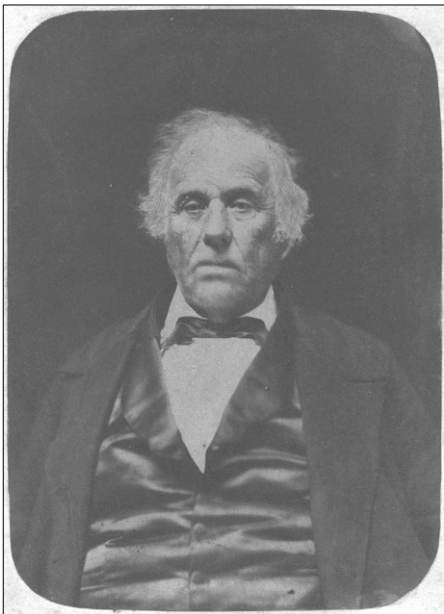
Among items displayed at the 1855 Antiquarian Supper were a number of books once owned by the Reverend Daniel Gould (1753-1842), Bethel's first settled minister. Photo, collection of the Bethel Historical Society

A Catalogue of Harvard College, previous to the Revolutionary War, was exhibited by John A. Twitchell. Sixty-two students graduated in 1771. A manuscript in the hand-writing of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, while in England, in 1766, was among the interesting relics of the past.

The first Thanksgiving sermon ever delivered in town was written by Caleb Bradley, A.M., candidate for the ministry, in 1798, and printed at Fryeburgh by Elijah Russell, of which a copy was exhibited. The first wagon that ever came into town, was in the year 1811. Whenever a person came to Bethel, they were said to come through the *woods*, as it was an unbroken forest for many miles. Consequently when a stranger came, everybody knew it, and ascertained his business before he left. The first building erected in the vicinity was a grist mill in 1774. No miller attended, but every man carried his grist and ground it himself. The same course was adopted with the saw mill. The first house painted white was erected in 1814 [*sic*], by Hon. Moses Mason, to whom we were indebted for many interesting facts. Seven by nine glass, at that time, was eleven cents a square; lime, seven dollars a cask; nails, a shilling a pound. On the other hand, a house frame cost nothing for the material. A pine tree that would now be worth fifty dollars, was sold for one dollar. In the early history of the town, a man went on foot 70 miles to Portland with his hand sled and hauled home a bushel of salt. The second child born in town is Joseph Twitchell, seventy-three years old, and still a vigorous man. His mother came into town on snow shoes. The first barrel of York flour ever brought into town was in 1824. Previous to that time the inhabitants carried a surplus of wheat to market. Among the first settlers was Eli Twitchell, whose daughter, now living, he carried in his arms twenty miles through the woods. He kept the first store in town. There are but three heads of families now living in town, who were such in 1799. The first representative to the State Legislature was Eliphaz Chapman in 1808. The first post-office in town was established in 1814 [*sic*], Moses Mason, Jr., P.M. The first ordained minister in town was Rev. Daniel Gould, a graduate of Harvard College. The first school-house in 1800. The first meetinghouse in 1806. The first family who wintered in town was that of Samuel Ingalls, in 1778.

The Indians frequently visited the inhabitants. Among these was an Indian doctress, the last of the Pequawket tribe, by the name of Mollycockett. She was fond of rum and emptyings, of the latter she would drink a pint at a time. A good story is told of her, that when her husband died she went to Canada. The priest demanded some money to pray his soul out of Purgatory. She bantered him to take less, but he refused.

She at last counted out the money and laid it on the table, when he made his prayer, and told her that her husband was safe. Then she said to him, "He sartin safe?" He replied to her satisfaction. She immediately took the money, and put it into her pocket. The priest threatened to pray him back again. She says, "Me Sanhop very careful Indian; when he get um in a bad place, he stick um up stick, and never catch um there agin"; and she went off with the money. She was supposed to be over a hundred years old, and used to say that she could remember Lovell's Fight in 1724. She has been dead about thirty-five years. A branch of the St. Francois tribe occupied the fertile intervalles in town where they raised their corn. The corn-hills were recognized many years after the town was settled.



Dr. Moses Mason (1789-1866) took part in the 1855, 1856 and 1857 Bethel Farmer's Club Antiquarian Suppers. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

In 1780 [sic] three of the citizens were taken captive by the Indians. One escaped, and the others were carried to Canada, where they were redeemed the next year.

Such are some of the facts gathered at the meeting, which we do not pretend to note down in chronological order. Nor is this the time to collect the materials for the history of the towns of Oxford County. The present generation can recount what they and their fathers have seen. It is contemplated at a future time to have a similar meeting embracing as many of the citizens as possible, for the purpose of collecting all the facts of the early history of the town. If a company of thirty indi-

viduals can bring out so many facts, what may we not expect from a public meeting. I need scarcely add that the meeting was a happy one to all present. Speeches were made, and the President presided with his usual ease and dignity.

N[athaniel] T[uckerman] T[rue]

1856 Antiquarian Supper

Oxford Democrat, Paris, Maine

Friday, February 29, 1856

Bethel Farmer's Club

The last meeting of the season was celebrated Feb. 13th, 1856, by an Antiquarian Supper at Grandfather Jedediah Burbank's. At sunset an ox team with sleds covered with chairs and quilts and coverlets, was started from the village by Uncle Gilman Chapman, containing the officers of the society and the belles of the village, dressed in bonnets which will hereafter be described. Horse sled teams were also started by Uncles Samuel Chapman and Moses Mason. It was curious to see with what interest we were viewed by those we met on the way, especially the ladies in their flaunting bonnets. We were warmly greeted by our host and hostess, and a numerous company thronged their capacious dwelling. A good old fashioned fire was blazing away in the fireplace to keep off the severe cold without.

The attention of the company was first directed to antiquities of the place, some of which I will mention. Of books there were many specimens, and as they exhibit the tastes of another generation in their selection, and as it brings to light books of which even a large library might be deficient, I will give them a more extended notice. The oldest book present was printed in 1579, entitled *Analysis Psalmorum*, written in Latin, exhibited by N. T. True, from the Academy Library. *A Treatise on the Supremacy of the Father*, by Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Sarum, 1718, a work on a subject rarely treated of at that day, by J. Burbank, Esq. A volume of *Sermons* by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, 1744. *Euclide's Elements*, 1746. A bound volume of the *New York Journal* and weekly *Journal* and weekly *Register*, 1799 to '91 [sic], by Dr. Wm. B. Lapham. Bound volume III of the *Boston Recorder*. A commentary on Revelations, author and date unknown. On the margin is the following: Nathaniel West, this is his book to read in the yeare 1684, March 9/10th, exhibited by Rev. Z[enas] Thompson. Dr. Watt's *Sermons* published previous to 1777, by the same. *The Connecticut Evangelist*, a magazine for 1801, Vol. 1, No. 8. A good number. *Sermons on the Modes and Subjects of Baptism*, by Joseph Lothrop,

D.D., 1803. Samuel Barker. His Book, Read with Candor. *Nature of Saving Conversion* by the Rev. Learned and Eminently pious Mr. Solomon Stoddard, 1719. A Family Bible, 1708, elegantly printed and bound, by Daniel Young. *Christian Institutes*, by the late Lord Bishop of Chester, 1775. From Rev. E. A. Buck. *Psalms of David* by Brady and Tate, 1774, by Jed. Burbank. *Two Sermons on the Prophecies*, by Rev. Eliphaz Chapman of Bethel, 1799. Mills and Hick's *British and American Register*, for 1774, by Gilman Chapman, Esq. *Memoirs of Chas. Louis, Baron de Pollnitz*, by John Locke.



Birch bark box made by Molly Ockett (circa 1740-1816) and displayed at the 1856 Antiquarian Supper. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

A variety of coins, by A. Burbank, also Continental money by the same, and J. A. Twitchell. Two pillow cases of Old India Cotton. What a chapter in our national history does this one article present! Linen spun and wove 88 years ago, by Susannah Barker, mother of J. Burbank, Esq. Table cloth 63 years old by Susannah Bundy, mother of Mrs. Frances Burbank. Wedding shoe 80 years old, with high heels in the hollow of the foot, by Mrs. John Harris. Tea cannister upwards of 100 years old, Dr. M. Mason. Tea spoons, sleeve buttons, buckles and teapots, too numerous to specify. An Indian pestle dug up on excavating the railroad. Wooden candlestick and antique lamp. An elegant porcelain teapot upwards of 100 years old, by Mrs. Wm. Gerrish. This was truly of elegant pattern and workmanship. A pitcher from a sister of Gen. Putnam, by Mrs. Roxanna Twitchell, a descendant. Sleeve buttons descended from Samuel Clark, who was killed in the Revolution, by S. W. Killburn. A box made of birch bark, by Mollyocket. A keg, mate to the one carried off filled with rum by the Indians when they captured Lieut. Jonathan Clark in 1781, by his son in law J. Burbank, Esq. Ancient candlestick, really elegant, by

Mrs. Moses Cross. Pocket book out in the French war, by John Burbank. From Jed. Burbank. Wrought worsted pocket book, 1754, by Lydia Morrell, Rowley, Mass. From Mrs. Timothy Chapman, also do. by Esther Parker, wife of Lieut. Jonathan Clark, wrought 77 years ago. Infant's short and cap of domestic linen, 75 years old, by Mrs. Sarah Twitchell. A scythe, the first ever used in town, by J. Burbank, Esq. An account book was instructive. I will give you a sample, exhibiting both the prices and customs of the times:

Sudbury Canada, 1793	£	s.	d.
To two Bush. Pertatoes	0	4	0
" 1-2 Bush. Rie		2	
" one mug of flip			9
" Boarding the School Mistress		2	8
" Oxen 1 day		2	
" 1 Mug Toddy			9
" 1-2 Mug Tod., and Meat Victuals		1	8
" 23 gills of Rum		13	6
" 1-2 douzen Pigeons			4
" 1 Quart Rum lent, Boarding and licker		1	

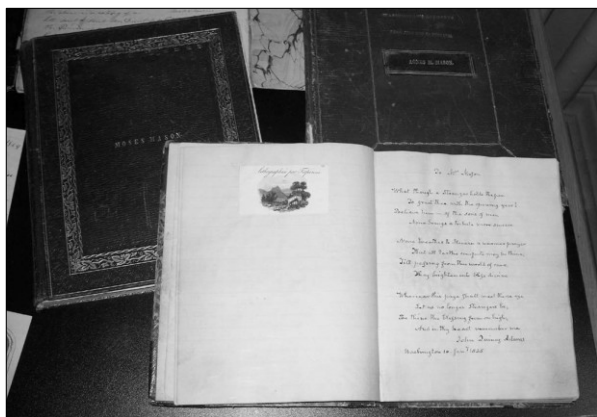
The oldest plantation record, is that of the Sudbury Canada, Committie, Report of Accounts allowed on Nov., 17[8]2. Among these was Wm. Benj. Russell's accompt for going to Boston with a Petition for souldiers for our defence, £9 18 0. Wm. John Grover's Account for going to Fryeburg on an express (to notify the inhabitants of the attack of the Indians) £1 10 0. Mr. Daniel Bean for 10 days work on the foort (the gar-rison).

A list of autographs of the following persons were interesting, among whom were John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, R. M. Johnson, James Madison, Benj. Franklin, Daniel Webster, John Davis, Silas Wright, W. C. Rives, J. C. Calhoun, Thomas H. Benton, Abbott Lawrence, Henry A. Wise. These were received by Hon. Moses Mason.

After an examination of the antiquities, the young people were entertained with an exhibition of the grandmothers at the spinning wheel. Flax was combed, and wool carded, an entirely new scene to many young persons present. But the grandmothers were rather outdone by Aunt Sylvia Kilburn, a young married lady who let the old folks understand that she could spin on a little wheel with a child in her arms. Grandfather Burbank in his blue frock, was very busy

making a birch broom; grandmother Burbank was trotting round lively as a cricket in her linen blue and white checked tire; while some of the children plagued their mothers by getting their fingers scratched in the fliers of the little wheel, and then sent off with a scolding.

But I must describe the dresses of some present. It would have made you laugh to see Uncle Moses Mason enter the room with his bell crowned fur hat on, a foot in height, and his checked linen handkerchief on his neck, made some 70 years ago, accompanied by his lady with her striped satin bonnet richly made, but of enormous dimensions, and large flowing dress of brocade green silk, followed by Uncle Gilman Chapman with his very low crowned hat and largely distended ruffled shirt; while his lady appeared by his side in her fan waisted dress as neat as a pin. Then followed a bevy of young ladies in straw bonnets protruding out in front so far as utterly to preclude the use of veils or the sight of sunshine, or stolen kisses; a regular Puritan bonnet, and were well calculated to reconcile the opposite sex to the special conveniences of the cut off bonnets of the present day. Large ear rings and enormous haircombs in the hair done up on the head, with combs behind their ears, gave a charm to those who wore them. A dozen or more different patterns of dresses of former days were conspicuous among the fair sex. Aunt Addie won applause in her low necked, short waisted dress with balloon sleeves, the fashion of a quarter century gone by. Dresses short and long, single skirted and double skirted, found their admirers. So changed were some of the ladies in appearance, that they were hardly recognized by their most intimate friends.



Autograph books owned by Dr. and Mrs. Moses Mason, containing the signatures of James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, John C. Calhoun, and Thomas Hart Benton. Displayed at the 1856 Antiquarian Supper. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

It is now past eight o'clock when the children are called to supper. The old folks are seated around the table, the children in the rear, or in an adjoining room, a blessing is pronounced by the patriarch present, Deacon Geo. W. Chapman, 75 years old, when bean porridge hot was dealt out to all present. Aunt Mary Ann Chapman had the credit of making this, and some of the boys declared that it tasted like oysters. It was pronounced by all to be the best they ever ate. Next come a milkpan full of hulled corn prepared by mother Lucia Kimball who has a way of fixing up things a little nicer than anybody else. It was good as everybody said. Grandmother Roxanna Twitchell provided the Johnny cake which was capital. Aunt Mary Brown furnished another which they said was nice, but the children grabbed it so quick, that I could not obtain a piece. The parched corn was furnished by Aunt Orinda Twitchell. It was better, I doubt not, than our fathers could obtain. Grandmother Burbank made the pumpkin pies, none of your milk and water sort of thing of modern times, but the genuine, fragrant smelling, and something tasting pumpkin pie of former days. Then there was the huge brown loaf like a volcanic mountain smoking away in the centre of the table. Sage tea was supplied by the old folks, with sugar to sweeten it for the sick, and molasses for the well ones, while the children drank water. There was considerable grumbling among the children because they had to wait so long for their supper. One great stout fellow turned round to his brother, and said, "Jess, we've got to live three weeks on clear bean porridge to pay for this treat on pumpkin pie and doughnuts." Jess was conscious of this, and did ample justice to the topping off things. Before we got half through with supper an alarm was raised that we were short of bean porridge. There was much excitement, but the alarm proved to be a false one.

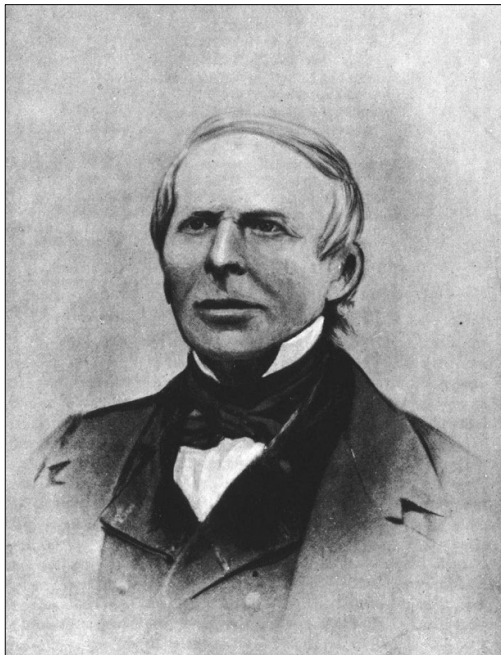
After they all had satisfied themselves with the good things set before them, remarks were made by the patriarch, Deacon Geo. W. Chapman, who stated that he was the only one present who had been a resident of Sudbury Canada, the former name of Bethel. He was reared on bean porridge commonly on two meals a day, and on one cooked meal if they could have bread and milk for breakfast and supper. In 1803 there was not, probably, a half a pound of tea in Peabody's Patent, now Gilead. He visited with his friend Lieut. Jonathan Clark in Sudbury Canada, on an ox sled sixty three years ago, and it was as pleasant a visit as ever he made. He said that he was born on Christmas day, and as his father was a great admirer of George Whitefield, who had a high regard for that day, he was named after that celebrated divine. He then repeated some verses which he composed last Christmas, on his 75th birth

day. It will be understood that Deacon C. is totally blind.

ON MY BIRTH DAY

Hail, blessed Christmas, precious word!
The brightest feature in my date,
The birthday of my blessed Lord,
The glory of his advent great.
I claim it too as my birth day;
Alas! it finds me in the dark;
I turn its beauties to survey.
But, to it say, I must depart.
My seventy-fifth has come and fled;
On Jordan's brink I lingering stand,
Ready to mingle with the dead,
When ere my Master gives command.
Blest Jesus bid me come to thee;
I ready come or willing stay,
Till thou a convoy send for me,
To guide me through the lonely way.
Then Jordan's stream I'll fear no more,
No more I dread the chilling wave,
My spirit upward then shall soar,
My body downward to the grave.

The recital of these verses, under such circumstances, touched a cord of sympathy in all that heard them.



Jedediah Burbank (1784-1860). Host of the 1856 Bethel Farmer's Club Antiquarian Supper. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

After supper we were entertained by some music from the Old Folk's Choir. The tunes were pitched in old style faw—sol—faw—m, and the rooms were filled with good music. The grandmothers piped in and out the old fashioned Counter, which younger readers must ask their grandmothers to explain to them.

At half past ten the whole company sung Old Hundred, which never sounded better, and our host requested the Rev. E. A. Buck to close with a prayer.

The society passed a vote of thanks to our host and hostess for their uniting efforts to make our visit agreeable. It was then voted to adjourn to some day in October next, selected by the officers of the society, for the purpose of holding a Town Fair, and for the collection of the antiquities of the town. Buck and Broad were driven to the door, and the happy company separated to their homes. Thus has ended the meetings of the Club for the season. Instead of grumbling about our neighbors, we have spent the swift hours of our winter evenings in real improvement and genuine enjoyment. We have made noble resolutions which we doubt not will be slowly but surely carried into effect. To the Clubs all over the land and to the one in Hebron and Turner, this Club sends greeting.

N[athaniel] T[uckerman] T[rue] Bethel, 1856

1857 Antiquarian Supper

Oxford Democrat, Paris, Maine

Friday, March 6, 1857

Antiquarian Supper

In conformity with our purpose, we took the cars for Bethel on Wednesday afternoon, and arrived there in due time, and found a large share of the guests assembled—the venerable patriarch and matrons, the middle aged, and the young folks, and the children—all full of life and their faces wreathed in smiles. Even the wrinkled faces of the aged seemed radiated with the glow of youth, by remembrance of the past days revived. And then the tables—they were loaded with the substantials of life, done up in the style of days of yore, in *part*—a strange mingling of the past with the present. There was the "bean porridge hot," the baked beans, the brown bread—this last a little *modernized*—the boiled dish, the "hulled corn" and milk, and all the et ceteras of the over-loaded tables of olden times, of which all partook with a relish and good will.

After the repast, remarks were made by the patriarchs, and then by the younger members of the assembly, mostly of a historical character, going to show the great change that had taken place in the condition of

the country, a full report of which we hope to get for our next issue.

The occasion was one of great interest to all, and of amusement to Young America, in the unique dresses of some of the ladies in particular. Although afflicted with a severe headache, we enjoyed the entertainment very much. Very many of the habits carried us back to boyhood days, and brought up the remembrance of uncles and aunts, long since departed.

As a finale to the winter meetings of the Farmer's Club, this festival was exceedingly interesting and appropriate, and we wish other towns, in this county in particular, would imitate the example of Bethel in this matter. Why may not every town in this county have its Farmer's Club, and thus, not only awaken a new interest in farming, and accumulate and diffuse agricultural information, but help form something like society in the farming community, of a rational, intelligent, and profitable character, instead of the gossiping visits which constitute so much of the intercourse among the families of the farming community, which every intelligent man wishes to escape as he would the leprosy.

Oxford Democrat, Paris, Maine
Friday, March 13, 1857
Antiquarian Supper

We give considerable space to Dr. True's report of the Antiquarian Supper at Bethel. We do this, as we doubt not it will be more interesting to our readers than anything we could write. What the Dr. writes is always worth reading. This we know our readers will fully endorse. There is an *unwritten* sequel to this nice time, of which the lovers of Bean Porridge have an *affecting* remembrance.

Antiquarian Supper of the Bethel Farmer's Club

The members of the club held their annual Antiquarian Supper, Feb. 25th, 1857, at the dwelling house of uncle N. T. True, and at half-past 2 P.M. the latch string was thrown out, and the grandfathers and grandmothers began to arrive on sleds covered with quilts and chairs to the music of antiquated sleigh-bells. Fresh arrivals occurred during the afternoon, with such forms of apparel as most of the grandchildren never saw before. The vigorous shake of the hand, the rich fund of anecdote, and the hearty laugh kept the old folks happy all the afternoon. There were thirty-five grandfathers and grandmothers present. The patriarch was Dea. George Chapman, aged 70 [*sic*]; the youngest, a grandmother, 48. The sum of their ages was 2050 years, average age 58 1-3. Early in the evening the uncles and aunts and grandchildren arrived in large numbers.



The Broad Street residence of Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True (site of today's Gehring House), where the Bethel Antiquarian Supper took place on February 25, 1857. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society



Tables were set for the old folks, while the children stood behind and were waited on in turn. The old-fashioned tin trumpet called the company to supper, a few remarks of welcome were made by uncle True, and the president, uncle Josiah Brown, called on the Patriarch to crave a blessing, when the bean porridge was served out in abundance. It has been suggested since, that some ate of this more than was proper. We thought that the bean porridge last year was the nicest ever made, but we cannot help thinking that aunt Susie True, grandmother J. A. Twitchell, and aunt Gilman Chapman can make it a little nicer than any body else in this world, at any rate it was the theme of conversa-

tion for several days afterwards. Then passed round the hulled corn and milk in all sorts of antiquated dishes. This was furnished by grandmothers Lucia Kimball and Laura Young. Then came along the *biled vittles*, by aunt Mary Brown. Grandmother Timothy Barker came trotting along with the baked pudding and beans. Aunt Phebe Twitchell produced the old-fashioned election cake. Aunt Gilman Chapman, aunt Dr. Grover, and aunt Levi Twitchell piled in the fragrant pumpkin pies. Indian pan-cakes by grandmother J. A. Twitchell. Parched corn by aunt Joseph A. Twitchell, and baked peas by aunt Silvia Kilborn. Moose steak was furnished by Dr. Grover.

Then there was an abundant supply of pastry to tickle the more modern tastes of the young gentry, some of whom, if they don't behave better in the presence of their superiors, will, before they die, find a lodgment in the State Prison. Let them beware.

After supper the grandfathers were called upon. Grandfather Dea. George Chapman first spoke as follows: My friends, the Past and Present on this occasion are brought together. The differences are but very little in reality. What have the present generation gained over the past in domestic and civil pursuits, sound knowledge and righteousness? Among the improvements within my memory, I recollect the first list of machine rolls for wool fifty-three years ago. I saw the first cotton factory spindles the same year in Massachusetts. My play-ground in boyhood is now the city of Lowell. Where I slid down hill, are now large blocks of buildings.

And yet there have been improvements in morals as well as in domestic arts. Within the present century, the missionary society has been formed, the Bible society, and Tract societies, whose object is to benefit the human family. Then there is the Sabbath School, whose recent achievement in sending out the *Morning Star*, whose sails are now spread to carry messages of love and good will to men, is among the eras of our race.

Hon. Moses Mason spoke: Forty-two years ago I moved to Bethel Hill. Two other houses containing three families constituted the site of the present village. In what constitutes the west parish of Bethel, Gilead and Shelburne, only one couple remains who then inhabited the territory. There were then but two roads to market, one to Portland by way of Norway, the other by way of Waterford. It was then a solid growth of forest all around the opening where the common now is. Strangers came to town on horseback. Everybody expected to know their business, and when they left. I was appointed first postmaster in town 42 years ago. It was first carried to the other side of the river to my father's. It came by way of Waterford, Paris, Rumford

and Bethel. In the summer it came on horse back, once on foot. (I must be allowed to interrupt the Dr's speech to relate an incident. The Dr. and myself were witnessing the first arrival of the [railroad] cars to this village. Said the Doctor, "I do not feel half the excitement now that I felt when I first heard the postman's horn a mile distant with the first mail to Bethel. *Then* I felt excited." N[athaniel] T[uckerman] T[rue]) During the first quarter there was no office in Gilead and Newry. I collected for government \$2.83. The postage on letters was 12 1-2 to 37 1-2 cents. There was no newspaper taken in town during the first quarter.

Jedediah Burbank, Esq., next spoke: I well remember more than 60 years ago, the machinery invented by Perkins, for making heads to brads, in Newbury, Mass. It was an object of the greatest curiosity, and visited by multitudes. There is present on this occasion the first scythe ever used for cutting grass in this town. You may see here a marked change for the better in this important instrument. I have here a memorandum of household furniture given to Esther Parker, wife of Lieut. Jonathan Clark, which will show to young ladies present the habits of industry among your grandmothers. Among these articles were 18 lbs. wool, 6 lbs. tow, 12 do. flax, 1 trammel, and 1 bread trough.

John True, Esq., of Pownal, spoke. My father, Jonathan True, and his brother-in-law, were the first settlers in Pownal. They lived in the southwest corner of the town, a mile and a half from the nearest neighbor. I was born in 1785, and am the third male child born in town, and the oldest native resident now living. I can remember distinctly the history of the town as far back as 1790. My father would take a bag of corn on his back, five miles and back to mill, through a bushed out road a greater part of the way. It was necessary to go five miles to obtain ox work. The sweetening for family use was mostly made from maple sap. My father would point out his boys to his friends as his *cubs*. There was no road to the center of the town till I was eight years old. When eight years old my father raised ten acres of corn, and my stent through the winter was to shell one bushel a day. About one-fourth part of the town was owned by the Powell family, and remained unsold till 1808.

The chief employment of the inhabitants was lumbering. They cut tun timber which was shipped to England for \$1.00 per tun. I was twenty-five years old before they had a settled minister. One of the hardest employments of the females of that day was the breaking and carding of wool. They often worked out doors, pulled and spread the flax for rotting. It was customary to invite all the neighbors of the vicinity to a wool breaking. Spare cards were always kept on hand for the boys. The use of ardent spirits was not common

until a later period, except at huskings and raisings. Another kind of employment now out of use, was card-board making. There was a machine at North Yarmouth, and it was our winter's employment to rough out the boards and send them to the machine. We had a machine of our own for making the handles. These boards were boxed up and sent to Boston. I once shaved out three gross a day for a fortnight in succession. One winter we kept the machine going night and day. People labored hard and fared hard, but generally were in good circumstances until the war of 1812.

Daniel Young spoke: I can well remember the time when my father erected the first frame for a wool carding machine in America, which was put in operation by Mayall in Gray. He manufactured broadcloth which he carried to Boston on horseback for sale.

Dr. Joshua Fa[nn]ing, of Long Island, New York, spoke: My grand[father] came from England, settled on Long Island. Among the incidents he would mention [would be] the existence of a building still standing where they went to church with their guns on their shoulder. Their usual food was corn and milk, with meat twice a week. In his boyhood they planted potatoes with the skins upward, three in a hill in a triangular form. Now one horse and a boy will plant four or five acres a day in the same locality. The boys and girls used to have frolics in pulling flax, to whom punch was furnished as a drink. In those days there were no double wagons nor carts. Now there are no spinning wheels. It is a rare thing now-a-days to obtain pure linen thread. It is nearly all mixed with cotton as the microscope will show.

Sylvanus Poor, Esq., of Andover, next spoke: The first settlers of Andover came from Andover and Methuen, Mass. A company of young men went as far as [Bethel], and finally commenced a settlement in Andover. My grandfather, Ezekiel Merrill, and wife, first moved into town in 1789. For two years his wife saw no female except the native Indians. They lived on little birds known as the cross bill, which they baited and caught in traps. After two years, my grandmother came to Bethel on horseback, when there came a great snow-storm, and she walked home on snow-shoes. Their log house took fire and burned up with everything in it. In 1792, the first mill was built. The proprietors offered 400 acres of land to the man who would erect it. First post office was in 1823, and the mail was carried in a pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. D[arius] Forbes, of Paris, spoke: Paris was my native town. My grandfather came to the spot where I now live in 1805. When he came, it was next to an impossibility to reach the town with a wagon. Within my recollection the post-office at Paris Hill was the farthest interior then established. On Saturday afternoons, the

postman's horn might be heard beyond the depot at South Paris and sometimes below Norway Village. The whole weekly mail could be taken in the hand. Next it was carried in a sulky, then in a stage-coach, and finally in the cars (and if more speed is necessary it can be sent by lightning). Now the daily mail goes by the hundred weight.

Uncle N. T. True begged the privilege of saying a word. He said that he came to this town 22 years ago the present month, for the purpose of teaching the first High School ever taught in this town. From that single school situated in a remote corner of the State, in a village of half a dozen houses, no less than ten individuals have become members of legislative bodies in different States in the Union. He could not tell whether or not it might arise from his superior knowledge of politics that has rendered so many of his pupils so successful in political life. Most of these are comparatively young men, and we may yet hear more of them as public men. One reason of their success may have arisen from the fact that they were all good boys, and good boys will make good men.

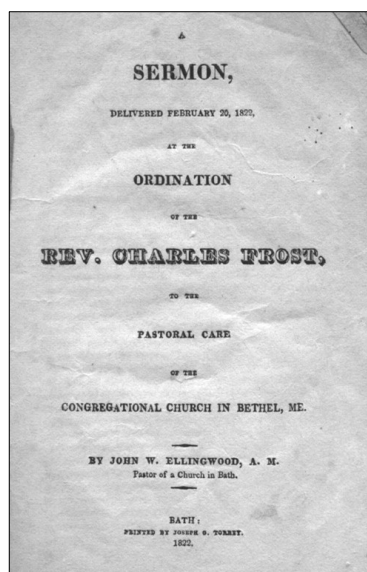
Hon. A Grover responded: I claim to be one of that number. I can call to mind the names of Twitchell and Davis, now in our State Senate, among the members of that school. Then there was Col. R. I. Burbank, of Boston, who won the barrel of apples in the last Presidential campaign, and Kimball, of Paris, and Grover, in Oregon, and many others who have attained to honorable positions in society.

But I wish to allude to the old people present. If this evening's entertainment is a sample of the hard times which they talk so much about, I shall begin to doubt the reality of their past trials. But we do possess some things of which they knew nothing. They had no railroads, steamboats, nor telegraphs in their earlier days, things which have almost served to revolutionize the state of society.

After the speeches, came an exhibition of antique dresses. And how shall I describe them? There were Uncle Moses Mason in his cocked hat, and his lady in her calash and splendid variegated satin dress; Grandmother Burbank in her drab colored fur jockey hat, and purple silk dress, a sample of the fashion 40 years ago; Uncle Gilman Chapman in his wedding suit, and aunt in her Leghorn Hat; Grandmother George Chapman with her old-fashioned pelisse, her small calico shawl, with a cap containing sixteen yards of ruffle; Aunt Mary Brown and Aunt Poor, with their balloon-sleeved dresses; Aunt Ellen Barker with her dress, the very opposite of those at the present day. Imagine a lady of slender form in a dress of only two breadths at the bottom. It was a pleasure to stand by her side without injury to one's crural extremities. Uncle N. T. True,

who, by the way, is under any circumstances, a pretty handsome man, attracted the special attention of the ladies in his small clothes and hair tied up in a queue, while aunt Susie appeared in her long-trailed dress of blue silk of more than a century old, and crimp cushioned head dress. The President appeared in antique spectacles, lopped hat, and overcoat reaching to the ground. Then came the young ladies, Mademoiselle B., from the city, appeared with queenly demeanor in her green and white brocade with its long trail, and next in a double skirt, with bodice behind instead of before, the fashion of a century gone by. Then there were Miss M. E. B., with her straight dress, and waisted apron; Miss H. A. T., with her high horn comb, reaching from ear to ear. Miss W. B. N., most admirably deceived her own friends in the character of an old lady. They all appeared uncommonly attractive. One could not help laughing to meet one person with the waist up in the back, another with the back in front, while another had no waist at all. It was an admirable position to study the principles of a correct taste independent of mere fashion.

Next came the carding and spinning, in which Grandmothers Stevens, Twitchell, Mason, and Barker took part, much to the gratification of the juveniles present who had never witnessed the like before.



Sermon delivered at the Ordination of Rev. Charles Frost in Bethel, 1822. Displayed at the 1857 Antiquarian Supper. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

Next came the exhibition of antiquities. These were very numerous. Among them was the head of an ancient Mexican idol from the great Pyramid of Cholulu, by N. T. True. A slab of gypsum from the ancient

Nincoch, with a crowned king cut in relief, by Rev. F. A. Buck. An Ink-horn with ink, pen, and knife, from Syria, the same as mentioned by Ezekiel, and still worn in the girdle of the Turks. The oldest book present was printed eight years before the landing of the Pilgrims. The *Christian Warfare*, by I. Dovvname, Batcheler in Divinitie, 1612. *Commentary of the Epistle of James*, by Thomas Manton, 1663. *A Treatise of the Loves of Christ to his Spouse*, by Thomas Bolton, D. D., by Mrs. Hannah P. B. Chapman. From Academy Library, *Liba Psalmonem*, 1758. *Sacred Dialogues*, 1750. *Compendium of Christian Theology*, 1760. Dr. Halley's *Astronomical Table*, 1752. Manuscript of Observations of the Solar Eclipse, April 12, 1782, at Cambridge, Mass., by Rev. D. Gould, first settled minister in Bethel. By W. Heywood, *Selections in Reading*, by Noah Webster, jun., Esquire. By John Kimball, *The Orthodox Christian*, by Samuel Phillips, 1738. *Truth's victory over Error*, by David Dickson, 1684. By Timothy Chapman, *Communications made to the Mass. Soc. for promoting Agriculture*, 1806. By Rev. Mr. Buck, *Ordination Sermon of Rev. Charles Frost*, in Bethel, by J. W. Ellingwood, Feb. 20, 1822. Do. of Rev. H. Sewall, in Bethel, by D. Thurston, Jan. 20, 1819. Rev. J. Willard's *Sermon, On the duty of the good and faithful soldier*, 1781. *The Christian Institutes*, by Lord Bishop of Chester, 1755. *Mr. Ruthland against the English Popish Ceremonies*, 1637. By Mrs. Hannah P. B. Chapman, *Dilworth's Arith*, 1792. *Christ the Protector*, 1751. *The Fading of the Flesh, and Flourishing of Faith, or, one Cast for Eternity, and the only way to throw it well*, 1662. *The Prompter*, 1792. By Mrs. T. Chapman, *Confession of Faith in the Church of Scotland*, 1768. Newspaper in the Burman Language, from Dr. Judson. By Rev. D. Forbes, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind*, by Sir Matthew Hale Knight, 1677. By Mrs. Jacob Holt, 1 vol. *Boston Magazine*, 1785. *Reasonableness of Christianity*, by Jonathan Dickson, 1732. By J. A. Twitchell, first instrument for extracting teeth ever used in Bethel. Compass used in the original survey of the town. Mrs. S. A. Russell, an infant's shirt more than 100 years old. Pillow cases. An indenture date, 1757. Widow Smith, spoons 150 years. Mrs. J. A. Twitchell, a cap owned by her aunt, a niece of Gen. Putnam. W. Heywood, spoons 100 years. Mrs. J. Kimball, home-made lawn infant's cap, 1785. Mrs. H. P. B. Chapman, carving knife and fork, Capt. Wm. Bucknam, Falmouth, 100 years; a double skein of the thread could be drawn through the finger ring. By Dea. George Chapman, a petrified peach from the Sea of Galilee. Continental money. By Mrs. Nancy Brown, fine table cloth, spun by her at the age of 12. Table cloth 65 years. By widow Wm. Frye, a silver tankard, weight 2 1-2 lbs. avoirdupois, presented to Gen. J. Frye. The following is the inscription: *To JOSEPH*

FRYE, esq. Colonel and Commander-in Chief of the Forces in the Service of the province of the Mass. Bay, and late Major in the 2d Battalion of Gen. Shirley's Prov. Regiment, THIS TANKARD, From a just Sense of Care and Conduct of the Troops while under his Command at Nova Scotia, and a proper Resentment of his Paternal Regard for them since they returned to New England, Is Presented by His Most Humble Servants, the Officers of said Battalion. Boston, April 20th, 1757.

He also received an elegantly silver mounted sword at the same time. Chair owned by Capt. Nathan Marble. By Mrs. T. Chapman, table cloth and teaspoons. By T. Chapman, Spanish Crown, dated 1727. Mrs. Lydia Cook, pitcher, with inscription, O! the Roast Beef of Old England. By Mrs. Levi Twitchell, a sword picked up after the battle of Stillwater. Hair pin 120 years. By J. A. Twitchell, pocket and log book, made by Eleazer Twitchell, 1794. By Master Geo. M. Twitchell, powder horn more than 100 years old. Mrs. T. Barker, shoebuckles 60 years. Childs sack, 60 years. Calico, 100 years. By Isaac Cross, tomahawk used by Paugus in the Lovell fight. Mrs. L. Kimball, wooden waiter made by Capt. Eli Twitchell. By Stephen Holt, wooden bowl made by his father, 58 years. Moulds for running spoons. Manuscript of Zela Holt, while in Gen. Gate's army, at the capture of Burgoyne. List of autographs, by A. L. Burbank, also by the same, the following manuscript, which shows that even in the darkest hour of the Revolution, our fathers had some comforts: Camp Valley Forge, June 15th, 1778. Recd 631 Doller in full of all accounts. Twelve Barls of Beer, 584 Rols of Tobacco, 12 Teen nives, 22 1-2 hanks of Thread. JOHN FITCH ANECDOTES.

A pressure of other duties prevented us from noting down the numerous anecdotes of the Grandfathers. A few will suffice.

The following will serve to illustrate the customs of the times. Oliver Fenno commenced a settlement on Robertson's Hill, where the Robertson family still reside. He built the barn now standing. When the frame was ready to be raised, Master Powers told him that he must have some *spirit* to raise the building. It was in vain that Fenno expostulated. There was none to be had short of Standish, and no road save a horse-path. He offered to pay the hands for their labor, and furnish them with a good supper, but all in vain. At last the master-workman broke out, "*Why, I wouldn't be guilty of raising a barn without some spirit.*" So Fenno was obliged to suspend operations, mount his horse with a keg on each side, go to Standish and obtain the *spirit*. After a journey of four or five days, he returned, and the building was promptly raised. Fenno was the first and only blacksmith in town for many years. His shop

stood a little to the north east of the barn on the road. He afterwards went to Jay, where he died.

A pleasing reminiscence was related by a lady. Her grandmother belonged to a family of musicians, and when a girl she had learned to play very skillfully on the snare drum. They lived on the banks of the Connecticut River, and when her brothers were discharged from the war at the close of the Revolution, she waited for their arrival on the opposite bank. As they appeared in sight, she beat a familiar and favorite movement on her drum, which was at once recognized by her brothers, who returned the salute by re-echoing the same with their musical instruments. Such a recognition must have been peculiarly exciting to the actors.

The last beaver was caught in town in 1827—the next year after the White Mountain slide. He had a dam on Alder River. He was first caught in the trap by the fore-leg which he gnawed off, then by the other fore-leg which he also gnawed off, and, lastly, by the hind-leg by which he was secured. The last moose caught in town was in 1855. The last sable in 1856.

The oldest person being in town the present year was Chloe Young, who died Feb. 20th, 1857, aged 92 1-2 years. Her descendants were 15 children, ten of whom survive her, 84 grandchildren, 154 great grandchildren, and 2 great great grandchildren, total 216. The oldest person now living in town is Richard Estes, aged 88.

A diary kept by Zela Holt while a soldier in the French and Indian war will show to boys of 16 what were the toils of their grandfathers. The following is extracted: 15th Sept. Went till eleven at night, and did not find the place, and laid down until three in the morning, and then we went two miles. 16th day crossed the Lake 12 miles above the fort, and steered for Lake George, and laid in the woods. 17th day we marched for the old landing at Lake George, and we marched most all night and we got through the woods and got round the enemy just about the break of day at the old ferriage. 18th, this morning John Andrews was shot in the right hip whilst attacking the Block house at the mills. This day we had the luck by God's assistance to march into the French lines and there we staid all night. 20th, we marched to the French lines, and back and forth all day. 21st Sunday we laid at the old landing. 22nd we started for Diamond Island and rowed all night. 24th we rowed down against Diamond Island and they were too strong, and they killed one man aboard our vessel, and broke one man's leg on board the bateaux, then we retreated to the east side of the Lake and marched about 3 or 4 miles and camped in the woods. 25th we marched for Spenshore, and we got out to the roads about sundown and camped in the woods. 26th, we marched to Speens' and laid in the

open air. 27th, we marched for Pollet and laid in (gonnel?) 28th we got in Sunday. 29th Found the things which I left. 30th, rested. October 1st. Washed my shirt and hose. 2nd, marched to Manchester and encamped.

A remark of Gen. Hastings, one of the first settlers, was related. He said that it was considered a great privilege to assist families in moving into town. He and another man, on one occasion, went to Standish on snow-shoes, and hauled through the woods on a handsled a woman and two children, and were glad to do it without any compensation, for the sake of having settlers added to their number.

The number of Revolutionary soldiers who have resided in town so far as ascertained was 43.

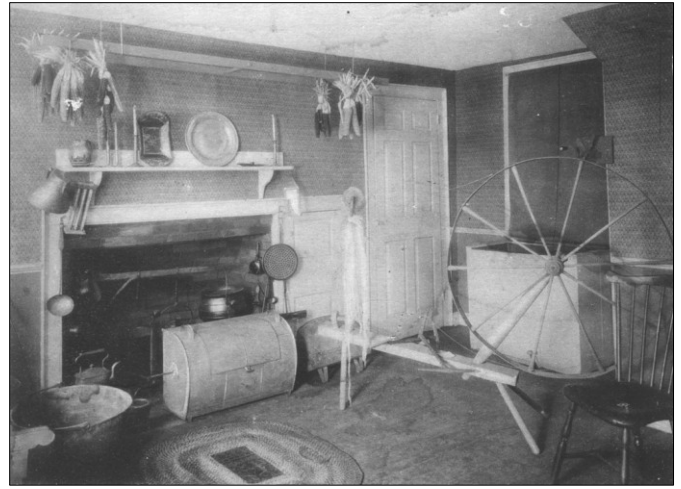
Then followed a description of my grandfather's kitchen, which was prepared for the occasion.

MY GRANDFATHER'S KITCHEN.

I as distinctly remember my grandfather's kitchen as any other object whatever. It was on the northeast side of the house. On one end was a cellar way, of which the latter was sometimes chosen to find the exit out of doors, and resulted in landing the unlucky person at the bottom of the cellar.

The walls were ceiled up with boards and painted red. At one end were the dressers, where were arranged in rows the pewter plates, platters and crockery. On the back side of the room were banks which served as substitutes for chairs. I remember the huge fire place, so large, that we grandchildren could look up the chimney by the half dozen. In the jamb was a small recess made by the omission of a brick where the ink-stand was placed to keep it from freezing, and where the family pipe found a lodgement. On one side was the huge oven with its wooden lid which often caught fire much to grandmother's inconvenience.

Then there were the huge andirons made of wrought iron by the neighboring blacksmith, and which were almost as tall as myself, but whose third leg was burned off and a rock substituted therefor. Above these hang the crane, hooks, trammels, tea-kettle, dish-kettle and great kettle for washing. In one corner were the poker and tongs, the latter no mean imitation of a long-legged boy. In one corner was a settle into which a half dozen found accommodations at once. The floor, made of clear spruce boards, was white as water, soap and sand could make it. Overhead were the poles on which hung the strings of apple, pumpkin, and clothes. Near the entry door were nails for the boy's hats and the bootjack, while over the fire-place was the old queen's arm just ready to go off.



An "old-time" kitchen, as recreated and photographed in the 1890s. Containing numerous "relics" and "ancient" accoutrements, this imagined setting came to symbolize the Colonial Revival movement (1880 to 1940), which sought to promote notions of democracy, patriotism, good taste, and moral superiority. Bethel's Antiquarian Suppers of the 1850s were a noteworthy precursor of the Colonial Revival movement in western Maine. Collection of the Bethel Historical Society

I well remember how grandfather would, just before sunset, cut off a large log, roll it to the door, raise it on end, and walk it into the house, just as he would a boy by the shoulders, lay it down by the side of the fire-place with other wood. In the morning the ashes are raked open, the slumbering embers begin to glow, the back log is rolled in and partially buried in ashes, with a back-stick, fore-stick, trimmings and kindlings to make the first fire. Sometimes the old spruce logs snap most merrily and burn the children. When the wood was green, the sap would sizzle out of the end of the wood and burn the unlucky fingers that found their way there.

I remember how grandmother would roast the potatoes in the ashes, and bake a cake before the fire on a board before breakfast. Then she would trot from dressers to cellarway, from which arose a peculiar odor from cheese and apples, both of which tasted better than any I ever meet with now-a-days. In short, the old kitchen served as a place for huskings, corn-shelling, reception-room, dining and work-room, and *meeting-house*. Here the neighbors met during the long winter evenings, had a bountiful supper, a bowl of apples and a mug of cider. Here they talked of witches and of battles fought and won. I remember how grandfather would speak of old *Ticonderogue* (which he always pronounced in four syllables, with peculiar emphasis on the last syllable) whither he was ordered during the

Revolution. But they are gone, all gone, and we remember them as among those who acted well their part in this world's history.

After examining the curiosities, grandfather John Kimball, who has been chorister in this parish for at least two generations, pitched the faw-sol-faw-m of an old tune from which the good old-fashioned counter came out most sweetly by the grandmothers. The Anthem for Easter was still pronounced good. Finally, Old Hundred was sung, a prayer made by Rev. E. A. Buck, and the company returned to their homes, highly gratified with the evening's entertainment.

The Club chose a committee to revive the laws, and another to make arrangements for the Town Fair in October next. Thus have ended the social gatherings for another year which will long be remembered by those who have been the most interested in them.

Any persons having any old account books, letters, anecdotes, books or papers, or any information pertaining to the history of this town, are requested to send them to the writer of this article. Also any information respecting the Indians, Indian names of places, meaning of Indian names in this vicinity. Anecdotes of early settlers, exploits in hunting, accounts of Revolutionary

soldiers, and their services in defence of their country, will be very acceptable.

N[athaniel] T[uckerman] T[ruer]
[End]



Dr. Moses Mason's copy of the July 15, 1859, edition of The Bethel Courier, featuring Nathaniel Tuckerman True's weekly "History of Bethel" column (containing information gathered at the Antiquarian Suppers of the 1850s). Collection of the Bethel Historical Society



Bethel Historical Society

P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012

207-824-2908 • 800-824-2910

info@bethelhistorical.org

www.bethelhistorical.org

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